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*ent. 2*  
*n/ 18/2005*  
*J. J.*

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-5 (canceled)

Claim 6 (currently amended): A packet forwarding [[ The ]] system [[ as recited in claim 4, ]] comprising:

(a) an interface system for receiving packets and having a plurality of channels;

(b) a plurality of framing service engines; and

(c) a channel manager for assigning channels to ones of the framing service engines, the channel manager being arranged to dynamically assign the channels and configured to receive data about the framing service engines, the channel manager further being configured to assign channels to ones of the framing service engines on the basis of the data, the data including information about utilization of framing service engines, wherein at least one framing service engine is configured to frame packets from higher layer protocols and at least one framing service engine is configured to deframe packets from lower layer protocols.

Claim 7 (original): The system as recited in claim 6, wherein the framing service engines are configured to operate on AHDLC packets.

Claim 8 (original): The system as recited in claim 7, wherein the interface system comprises a plurality of network interfaces terminating a plurality of point to point links.

Claim 9 (canceled)

Claim 10 (canceled)

Claim 11 (currently amended): The packet processing system of claim 34 [[ 9 ]] wherein said channel manager that actively allocates framing service engine ones of said plurality